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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH FORMER PRESIDENT ELY
MOHAMED VALL

Classified By: Ambassador Mark M. Boulware for reasons 1.4 (B and D).

Ambassador's Meeting with Former President Ely Ould Mohamed
Vall

11. (C) Ambassador met with former President Ely Ould Mohamed Vall at the latter's residence on September 7. Vall, recently returned from Ireland where he has been studying English, indicated that he would be remaining in Nouakchott at least through Ramadan. Vall wanted to discuss the current political crisis and to offer his thoughts about a possible solution. The former president regretted the coup d'etat and said that international community was right in insisting that it not stand. He said that it was important that this be the "last coup" in Mauritania and he praised the firm position taken by the US and others. Vall noted that while the concerns of the international community were an essential element in resolving the crisis, it was only one of three elements, all of which needed to be resolved.

12. (C) The former president insisted that any successful resolution of the crisis would also have to deal both with national political expectations and the coup-makers themselves. Vall said that the ultimate solution had to be "made in Mauritania" and could not be imposed from outside. He said that it was clear that President Abdallahi had to be freed and restored as the international community demanded "in order to teach the lesson" that coups were no longer acceptable. He went on to say, however, that the restoration could not be definitive and with a view for completing the full original mandate. President Abdallahi, he argued, had squandered his legitimacy through poor leadership. Vall said that the restoration period had to be transitional and brief, leading necessarily to early new elections. Finally, Vall said that the coup-makers themselves had to be considered and that pressure to force them out had to be complemented by giving them a way out. He opined that, in the end, convincing Aziz would be the key as the others would be "less of a problem."

13. (C) Ambassador Boulware thanked Vall for his insights and noted that there was a fair amount of convergence between the USG's appreciation of the situation and his own. He noted that details of post-coup arrangements would be important and that a "pro-forma" restoration leading quickly to a resignation by President Abdallahi would not meet with our approval. Vall agreed that President Abdallahi had to play a role in finding a solution and observed that his detention complicated that. Pressed to expand his thoughts about how to convince the junta to relinquish power, Vall said that the important thing was to maintain a strong position and to

demonstrate firm solidarity in the international community, both locally and internationally.

¶4. (C) Comment: Vall's proposals are consistent with an emerging compromise scenario but he offers little specific advice. The broad outlines of a potential political solution are relatively clear, but it remains to be seen whether General Aziz can be convinced to yield and, if he does, exactly what sort of post-coup arrangements would be broadly acceptable both to Mauritians and to the international community.
Boulware